



PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

October 25, 2016

Dear Neighbors of Spring Garden Park:

We thank everyone who participated in the process to develop the design options for Spring Garden Park. Many of you have participated in the process to advocate for, design, and construct Spring Garden Park since it was acquired by the City of Portland from Portland Public Schools in 1999. Public participation is at the core of our democracy and it is important that your voices are heard.

The park planning process originally concluded in February 2016 following approximately eight months of public outreach that included five Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings and three open house meetings. Upon completion of this process, the PAC recommended a proposed design. In the past few months, we heard from some community members that they were concerned about one feature of the PAC-recommended design- the concrete pad and the seating wall. After hearing from community members both in support of this design element and those opposed to it, we asked Portland Parks and Recreation (PP&R) staff to consider more input. One additional community meeting was held in September to assess the pros and cons of three different design options around this feature, relative to the purpose of the park and who it will serve. The options weighed in this September community meeting included:

- Option 1** - a concrete pad and seating wall (recommended by the Project Advisory Committee)
- Option 2** – no concrete pad with seating wall remaining
- Option 3** – removal of the concrete pad and seating wall, leaving a grassy bowl with boulders and trees

After the months-long public involvement process that included many stakeholders, an additional community meeting to understand concerns about option 1, and a review of survey results, we have decided to accept the Project Advisory Committee's recommendation.

As the Commissioner-in-Charge and Director of Portland Parks & Recreation, we

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are responsible for advocating for all constituents and current and future park users. It is rare that every member of a neighborhood agrees on the value of every individual aspect of a park. It is also rare that every member of a neighborhood agrees on the purpose a park should serve. When there is not unanimity in these important inputs, and while the latest online survey indicated some increase in members of the community favoring Option 3, it's important to us both to rely on the full spectrum of public input processes that spanned many months and many stakeholders with multiple opportunities to inform the plan. Based on a full review all of this information, we did not find a compelling reason to change the park design from what was originally proposed by the PAC. Several neighbors voiced concern that the wall, concrete pad and electrical outlets will lead to Portland Parks & Recreation scheduling many concerts and/or movies in this neighborhood park. When it is completed, the Multnomah Neighborhood Association will be blessed with three great parks facilities, as this new park joins Gabriel Park and the Multnomah Arts Center (MAC). PP&R responds to requests from neighborhood groups when planning the Summer Free For All events. We expect that the Multnomah Neighborhood Association will continue to choose the community's preferred site for events, and that limitations on parking and transit availability at the new park will continue to make both Gabriel Park and the MAC more suitable for regional events.

The PAC's recommendation was based on community input. All the program elements were developed in a transparent and open way that allowed significant community feedback throughout the process. We are grateful for the hard work of the PAC volunteers. The project webpage and meeting notes can be found here: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/67420>.

We understand that some neighbors will be pleased with this decision, and some neighbors will not be pleased. Whatever your preference regarding the design, we hope that everyone will keep perspective of the enormous value that the park will hold for neighborhood residents, including young children, teenagers, adults and senior citizens. Construction will begin in early spring, with the anticipated park opening in late summer 2017.

The Spring Garden site will soon be home to a wonderful park for all users with diverse needs, with associated street improvements and sidewalks. Thank you for your participation and support in achieving this longtime neighborhood goal.



Amanda Fritz, City Commissioner



Mike Abbate, PP&R Director